

*Amendments to the Claims*

1-25. (cancelled)

26. (currently amended) ~~An automated~~ A system for generating ~~a plurality of~~ authorized ~~drafts on~~ payments from financial accounts belonging to a plurality of payers, in payment of debts to a payee, comprising:

input means for performing an electronic information input process wherein a system operator contemporaneously enters information sufficient to identify a new payer previously unknown to the system and information specifying a ~~draft~~ payment to be generated from ~~on~~ an account of that payer, said information including a financial institution identification number, ~~payer~~ payer account identifier, and an amount to be ~~drafted~~ paid from said payer's account to said payee;

an institutional database comprising financial institution identification information;

institution verification means associated with said input means for receiving said financial institution identification number and comparing said financial institution identification number to entries in said institutional database, wherein when said financial institution is found in the institutional database, the institution verification means retrieves identifying information about the institution and verifies the accuracy of said financial institution identification number, and wherein when said financial institution is not found in the institutional database, an error indication is generated; and

output means connected to said input means for receiving said information specifying a ~~draft~~ payment and generating in electronic information form instructions for said payment to said payee ~~a copy of said draft~~.

27-50. (cancelled)

51. (New) The system of claim 26, wherein said output means comprises a transmitting device, said transmitting device operating to transmit said instructions for said payment via a communications channel to a central location for processing said payment.

52. (New) The system of claim 51, wherein said instructions for said payment are in a format suitable for processing by a central automated clearing system.

53. (New) The system of claim 52, wherein said instructions for said payment are in a bank check format.

54. (New) The system of claim 52, further comprising a printer at said central location and processing means for printing a paper draft on said printer at said central location based on said instructions for payment.

55. (New) A process for making payments from a payer having a financial account at a financial institution to a payee based on authorization in a telephone conversation between the payer and a system operator representing the payee, comprising the steps of:

providing a payment order computing system having an input screen for receiving payment order input information;

conducting a telephone conversation with a payer who has not previously authorized payments to payee by telephone, in which said system operator obtains said payment order input information, including at least identification of said financial account and a financial institution identification code identifying said financial institution holding said financial account, and enters said payment order input information in said input screen;

using said computing system, automatically verifying said financial institution identification code upon system operator entry of said payment order input information, by comparing said code to entries in an institutional database and determining whether said code matches an entry in the database;

if said code matches an entry in the database, retrieving identifying information about the institution and displaying said identifying information for the system operator;

if said code does not match an entry in the database, displaying an error indication to the system operator whereby the operator may request corrected information from the payer;

using said input information, generating an electronic record containing information sufficient to generate an order to pay an amount authorized by said payer to said payee; and

processing said electronic record and transmitting information to a central clearing system for processing to cause a transfer of funds from said payer account to said payee.

56. (New) The process of claim 55, wherein the step of processing said electronic record and transmitting information to a central clearing system includes the step of printing a paper draft.

57. (New) The process of claim 56, wherein said step of transmitting information to a central clearing system includes the step of transmitting said paper draft to said central clearing system.

58. (New) A system for generating authorized payments from financial accounts belonging to a plurality of payers, in payment of debts to a payee, comprising:

input means for performing an electronic information input process wherein a system operator contemporaneously enters information sufficient to identify a new payer previously unknown to the system and information specifying a payment to be generated on an account of that payer, said information including a financial institution identification number, payer account identifier, and an amount to be paid from said payer's account;

an institutional database comprising financial institution identification information;

institution verification means associated with said input means for receiving said financial institution identification number and comparing said financial institution identification number to entries in said institutional database, wherein when said financial institution is found in the institutional database, the institution verification means retrieves identifying information about the institution and verifies the accuracy of said financial institution identification number, and wherein when said financial institution is not found in the institutional database, an error indication is generated; and

an output transmitting circuit associated with said input means and connected to a communications channel, said output transmitting circuit including a processing circuit that processes said information specifying a payment to generate electronic information, wherein said output transmitting circuit transmits said electronic information to another site to enable transfer of funds through an electronic check clearing system in accordance with said electronic information.

59. (New) The system of claim 58, wherein said electronic information transmitted by said output transmitting circuit includes a financial institution

identification number, a payer account identifier, and an amount to be paid from said payer's account.

60. (New) The system of claim 59, further comprising printing means at said another site for receiving said electronic information and printing a paper draft to enable said transfer of funds.

61. (New) A process for making payments from a payer having a financial account at a financial institution to a payee based on authorization in a telephone conversation between the payer and a system operator representing the payee, comprising the steps of:

providing a computing system having an input screen for receiving payment information;

conducting a telephone conversation with a payer previously unknown to the computing system, in which said system operator obtains said payment information, including at least identification of said financial account and a financial institution identification code identifying said financial institution holding said financial account, and contemporaneously enters said payment information in said input screen;

using said computing system, automatically verifying said financial institution identification code contemporaneously with system operator entry of said payment information, by comparing said code to entries in an institutional database and determining whether said code matches an entry in the database;

if said code matches an entry in the database, retrieving identifying information about the institution and displaying said identifying information for the system operator whereby the system operator may verify institution identification with the payer;

if said code does not match an entry in the database, displaying an error indication to the system operator whereby the operator may request corrected information from the payer;

using said input information, generating an order to transfer an amount authorized by said payer to said payee, including financial institution and account information compatible with a banking automated clearing system such that said payment can be automatically processed by said clearing system; and

submitting said order to transfer to said clearing system for further processing therein to cause a transfer of funds from said payer account to said payee.

62. (New) The system of claim 61, wherein said step of generating an order to transfer an amount includes printing a paper draft payable to said payee.

63. (New) The system of claim 62, wherein said paper draft includes a signatory block for an authorizing indicia other than said payer's signature.

64. (New) The system of claim 61, wherein said step of submitting said order to said clearing system is performed by printing and manually submitting a paper draft.